

June 29, 2017

Harry T. Crawford
4350 Butte
Anchorage, AK 99504

Federal Communications Commission
FCC Headquarters
445 12th St. S.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

Re: WC Docket 17-114

Dear Federal Communications Commission:

I am writing this letter because rural Alaska is still paying too much for internet. I am a former Alaska State Representative, and currently sit on the board of a large regulated public utility. I came to Alaska to help build the oil pipeline in 1975. At that time, we had almost no telephone infrastructure in rural Alaska and the phone service in the urban areas was satellite based and very costly and inefficient. What improved the telephone service was competition. I remember an executive of GCI sitting in my legislative office pleading that the Alaska legislature enact laws that would ensure its ability to compete against the larger company, ACS, through a level playing field. I thought competition was a good idea then and I think it is even a better idea today as we work to improve the cost and quality of providing internet to all Alaskans.

Unfortunately, we are hitting many roadblocks in achieving this. Today, rural Alaska has some of the worst internet connectivity and infrastructure in the nation and what does exist, is extremely costly. This situation is puzzling given the vast sums of Federal dollars that have been poured into building Alaska's telecommunications infrastructure, with the vast majority of that money going to GCI. The federal government substantially subsidized GCI's TERRA system in Southwest Alaska, yet the rates to consumers in that part of Alaska have not materially been reduced. GCI used the public money to build infrastructure as promised, but it has not materially reduced the rates it charges to consumers.

This appears to be the result of lack of competition to supply services in these regions served solely by GCI. GCI's monopoly position in its ownership of the infrastructure is yielding the predictable result---namely non-competitive high prices.

Competition is clearly needed. The school district in Nome Alaska learned that having just one other competitor in the marketplace yielded substantial cost reductions. Once the Nome community had access to the Quintillion subsea fiber, they put out to bid their 100/megs per month contract, and a non-GCI competitor offered 100/megs at a cost of \$95,000/month compared to GCI's prior rate of \$305,000/month. The fruit of competition needs to be enjoyed by all rural Alaskans.

The Alaskan Internet playing field needs to be leveled and fast. The benefit of the public monies should not be enjoyed solely by GCI's shareholders. Alaska's schools and hospitals should not be continuing to pay exorbitant rates for Internet. There must be some mechanism for the FCC to ensure that competition can take place using the infrastructure that the federal and state governments have substantially subsidized.

Before GCI is allowed to merge into Liberty, the FCC should require GCI to make publicly funded infrastructure available to competitors at the same cost that it makes it available to its own related companies. This will enable other companies to compete on an even footing for the business of Alaskans, our schools and our hospitals.

I am afraid that allowing GCI to disappear inside an even larger entity that has even less interest in competition or level playing fields will doom generations of Alaskans to high internet costs, suppress Alaska's economy and make a mockery of the substantial public funding of the services that GCI provides.

Please use your authority to ensure there is fair competition in Alaska to supply Internet by conditioning your approval of the GCI-Liberty merger on their being required to open use of their publicly funded infrastructure to other competitors on equitable terms.

Sincerely,



Harry T. Crawford

Cc: Via Email- FCC Staffers

transactionteam@fcc.gov; dennis.johnson@fcc.gov; sumita.mukhoty@fcc.gov; clay.decell@fcc.gov; linda.ray@fcc.gov; kathy.harris@fcc.gov; jeff.tobias@fcc.gov; brendan.holland@fcc.gov